

BOCC Wrap-Up / County Manager Update

September 29, 2025

9 a.m.

Present: Commissioner Brummer, Commissioner Pollock, Commissioner Swope, County Manager Ryan Barrett, Becky Butler, David Bailey, Mindy Brooks, Josh Weiss, Troy Nichols, Angie Hodge, Rachel Lester, Geoff Soderquist, Matt Patana, Erika Katt, Grace Jimenez, Graham Gowing, Larry Grove, Kirsten Wecker, Sarah Hensley, Natalie Kamieniecki, Caroline Garibay, Fionna Velazquez, Michelle Sauter, Tom Stanton, Rae Sisson, Vanessa Ruelas, Kirsty Ward

Guest(s): Unnamed guests, Jacob Cleary

Recorder: Rieva Lester

Public comment: None.

Legislative priorities: Josh Weiss and Troy Nichols recapped the county's 2025 legislative priorities and provided an overview of the state's financial forecast. They noted that the 2026 session likely will be relatively short.

The commissioners discussed potential legislative priorities for 2026, including the following:

- Funding to repair / replace the multiple failing century-old bridges
- Jail medical malpractice insurance
- Funding for public defense
- Industrial access
- Fairgrounds 4-H barn budget proviso
- Funding to address drain lines at the Fairgrounds while work is being done at the Midway (Dig Once)
- General fair funding since it's required via RCW
- Aging HVAC systems at Law and Justice and Public Health buildings
- Packwood sewer
- Onalaska Carlisle Lake dam safety
- Tort reform through Washington Counties Risk Pool

Josh and Troy suggested Lewis County highlight six to 12 decisions the county has made that showcase the county's fiscal responsibility and have set the county up for success, such as its pre-emptive budget-planning efforts as well as its accomplishments with broadband and the night-by-night shelter.

Executive session: At 9:31 a.m., Commissioner Brummer announced that the Board would be going into executive session until 9:51 a.m. to discuss the 508 shop under RCW 42.30.110(1)(c) and to discuss the following five topics under RCW 42.30.110(1)(i):

- Isaac West judgement

- Parrent tort claim
- Pries tort claim
- Ziontz potential litigation
- ACLU v Lewis County

At 9:51 a.m., Commissioner Brummer extended executive session until 10 a.m.

At 10 a.m., Commissioner Brummer extended executive session until 10:05 a.m.

Executive session ended at 10:05 a.m. Commissioner Brummer noted that no decisions had been made.

Commissioner Pollock made a motion to direct the PA's Office respond to the demand letter from Alex Ziontz as discussed in executive session. Commissioner Swope seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

Community Development Office Manager grade increase request: Mindy Brooks discussed the request to increase the Community Development Office Manager salary from a Grade 124 to 125 commensurate with similar Business & Office Manager positions.

Commissioner Pollock made a motion to increase the Community Development Office Manager grade increase as requested effective Oct. 1, 2025. Commissioner Swope seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

USGS gaging system program: Geoff Soderquist discussed billing received for the USGS gaging system. He said he feels the funding – more than \$82,000 annually – shouldn't come fully from the Roads fund. Erika Katt discussed uses of the river gauges. The commissioners noted that the data is used basin-wide – and beyond the Chehalis basin – and that the costs should be borne by entities beyond Lewis County. The commissioners directed staff to move forward with the agreement with USGS before the Oct. 1 agreement deadline and to reach out to Office of the Chehalis Basin and the Flood Authority for funding. The commissioners directed staff to have Public Works continue to serve as the contact for 2025 and to look into these river gages vs. the ones paid for through West consultants. The commissioners directed staff to include the topic on the agenda for an upcoming Flood Control Zone District meeting.

Water lab modernization: Meja Handlen said the estimated costs for the water lab modernization project have increased and that those increases are coupled with a decreased use of the services in response to the county's recently increased fees. Meja said labor and supply costs also continue to grow. The commissioners said they would further discuss the topic during the Sept. 30 budget meeting with Public Health and Social Services.

Developers' agreement / mediation: Mindy Brooks reviewed a draft agreement for joint mediation with the City of Centralia and the Port of Centralia. The commissioners directed Mindy to update the verbiage regarding representation for the port and the city to reflect that their representative will be an elected official of their selection. The commissioners said Commissioner Swope will serve as the county's representative.

At 10:47 a.m., Commissioner Brummer recessed the meeting until 11 a.m.

- At 11 a.m., Commissioner Brummer extended the board's recess until 11:15 a.m.
- At 11:15 a.m., Commissioner Brummer extended the board's recess until 11:20 a.m.
- At 11:20 a.m., Commissioner Brummer extended the board's recess until 11:25 a.m.

Recess ended at 11:25 a.m.

County insurance: County Manager Ryan Barrett said the commissioners are being asked to consider terminating the county's WCIF agreement.

Commissioner Pollock made a motion to authorize county staff to contact the Washington Counties Insurance Fund (WCIF) on or before Oct. 2 regarding Lewis County's intent to terminate its current agreement with WCIF. Commissioner Swope seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

Criminal Justice Treatment Account (CJTA) strategic biennial plan: Caroline Garibay outlined the proposals outlined in the CJTA strategic biennial plan.

Commissioner Pollock made a motion to CJTA strategic biennial plan. Commissioner Swope seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

Capital Infrastructure CFP proposal approval: Matt Patana discussed the listing of two projects: storm drains on the Midway at the fairgrounds and replacement of the boilers for the Law and Justice HVAC system.

Commissioner Pollock made a motion to direct staff to proceed with the two projects as presented: the storm drain project at the fairgrounds for an amount of up to \$1 million and the HVAC boilers at the Law and Justice building for an amount of up to \$275,000. Commissioner Swope seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

.09 policy for surplus property purchased with .09 funds: The commissioners directed staff to update the county's .09 policies regarding the sale of surplus property purchased with .09 funds and to amend current contracts to reflect the same: that sale proceeds would be required to be returned to the county.

Open Space Advisory Committee vacancy: Commissioner Pollock made a motion to direct staff to proceed with a resolution appointing Ryan Thode to the Open Space Advisory Committee. Commissioner Swope seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

Calendar for week of Christmas: The commissioners said they will hold meetings as regularly scheduled Dec. 22 and 23. They directed staff to cancel any meetings planned for Dec. 24.

2026 holidays: Rieva Lester said the commissioners are being asked to consider approval of the 2026 holidays.

Commissioner Swope made a motion to approve the 2026 holiday calendar as presented. Commissioner Pollock seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

Announcements / new business / calendars: Matt Patana said the city of Chehalis approved the county's frontage updates at the night-by-night shelter earlier in the morning.

Meeting adjourned at 11:47 a.m.